



Welcome Back Carolina!

Miss Universe Aruba returns after a month in Mexico

Carolina Raven, Aruba's representative to the Miss Universe Pageant 2007 returned from Mexico this week, after spending a whirlwind four weeks of appearances and interviews leading up to last week's finale. She was welcomed back by Aruban press and related some of her experiences during a press conference at the Wong Shueng Wong Restaurant in Oranjestad on Friday afternoon.

Renny Lacle and Marinus Wegereef of Star Promotions joined Carolina in expressing a heartfelt thanks to all those that sponsored her journey to the pageant and the necessary accoutrements to compete. Major sponsors were the Westin Aruba Resort, Caribbean Mercantile Bank and SETAR N.V., Aruba's national telecommunications company, amongst many friends and family that contributed to her participation.

During the welcoming conference, Carolina provided some amusing anecdotes from the world of beauty pageant competitions, and expressed appreciation for the wonderful experiences garnered from attending the pageant. Foremost was meeting other young women from all corners of the globe, forming close friendships, and learning about diverse cultures. Other memorable events during her month in Mexico included having dinner with the First Lady of Mexico, Marta Sahagún de Fox, and of course, meeting Donald Trump. She exhibited some interesting articles from Mexican newspapers that were covering the Miss Universe Pageant, including the publication "Excelsior," a major Mexico City daily that had chosen Carolina as one of their five favorite candidates for the title of 'Miss Universe.'

Though Riyo Mori, Miss Japan, won the title last week, Carolina expressed only gratitude for the entire experience, something she will always treasure, and stated that she is now ready to get back to her studies in Hospitality Management. Her mother Martha, who has supported her completely in this endeavor, also felt it would be a relief to return to normal life after the past year of preparation for the competition, and Carolina fulfilling her many duties as Miss Universe Aruba.

Carolina still has one more official task, and that is to pass on her crown to one of ten lovely young women that are now competing for the title of Miss Universe Aruba 2007-2008, who will represent the island in the Miss Universe Pageant next year. The final event in the selection of the island's candidate will take place in the Palm Beach Ballroom of the Westin Aruba Resort on Friday, July 13. Until that time, the girls will be groomed and prepared for international competition by a series of events that provide experiences similar to what they will have to go through during the Miss Universe event. Marinus explained that one can see the changes in the girls, the building of confidence and style, from the beginning months of the local pageant until the grand finale.

Carolina, a veteran of international pageants, and winner of the "Miss Teen International" competition held in San Jose, California in 1999, was an elegant and beautiful entry on behalf of Aruba for 2007. Renny Lacle expressed admiration for her devotion and winning personality that impressed much of the local and international media covering the pageant. Carolina also feels that it provided wonderful exposure for Aruba, with pictures of Carolina in costume all over the internet, in news sites, and she and Aruba are mentioned on many Miss Universe discussion sites in dozens of languages.